

VZCZCXYZ0013
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #2178 1740828
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 230828Z JUN 06
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0856
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5345
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 6556

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 002178

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ERIC BARBORIAK
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RECALL OF PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

¶1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies continued to center their reporting June 23 on the KMT's and PFP's plans to oust President Chen Shui-bian, and further investigations into the alleged role of First Lady Wu Shu-chen in the Sogo Department Store ownership case and an earlier political contribution controversy. News coverage also focused on the controversy over whether the government will lose its majority to major private shareholders on the board of directors of a local financial holding company Friday, and a local train accident-turned-murder case. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on page two that read "Bian Criticizes Current Chaos: Something That Should Happen in 2008 Has Happened Now." The newspaper also ran a news story on page two with the headline "Ma Calls for 'People to Determine' Whether Bian Should Stay Go."

¶2. In terms of editorials, the "Liberty Times" continued to criticize the pan-Blue camp's recall of President Chen, saying the move will only trigger political upheavals and is doomed to fail. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's speech Wednesday evening revealed his true intention to cause a power struggle. End summary.

A) "Scrutinize the KMT Behind Chairman Ma's Quibbling"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (6/23):

"... Ever since the transfer of political power in 2000, the pan-Blue camp has, on one hand, started to boycott the government's administration in the Legislature, and on the other hand, it has seized every opportunity it can to take to the streets. Such behaviors failed to win the support of a majority of Taiwan people, so [the pan-Blue camp] was defeated again in the 2004 presidential elections. This time, the pan-Blue camp launched a recall motion, citing reasons like President Chen Shui-bian having violated the Constitution and having engaged in corruption, but such a move is doomed to fail again. In fact, moves like a recall motion, a no-confidence vote, or street demonstrations will only trigger political upheavals, benefit a few aggressive politicians, or even offer China an opportunity to take advantage of Taiwan. If Chairman Ma really loves Taiwan, he should stop what he is doing now, call a halt to the recall mockery, and supervise the KMT legislators to reasonably review the appointments of Control Yuan members and the State Public Prosecutor-General and bills concerning flood control and arms procurements. He should use actions to demonstrate his love for Taiwan, which will definitely touch the Taiwan people more than a beautiful speech."

B) "Ma Reveals Recall Is Power Struggle"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (6/23):

"Kuomintang Party Chairman Ma Ying-jeou protested vigorously in a televised speech Wednesday evening that the recall motion against President Chen Shui-bian was not a 'power struggle' but an effort to cleanse and 'save' Taiwan's democracy. We naturally agree with the latter goal, but believe that the actions and statements made during this recall drive by Ma, People First Party Chairman James Soong and the legislators of their respective parties have provided ample reason to gravely doubt their sincerity. Ma's response to Chen's 'report to the people' was marred by poor delivery, but its most important failing was its transparent duplicity and cavalier treatment of fact, including distortions and misrepresentations of matters such as Taiwan's economic performance under the DPP government. ... We advice Ma to consider taking refresher courses in law and democratic theory before considering to run for president."

KEEGAN